

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1        1.     A communications method, comprising:  
2                 enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one  
3                 recipient through an instant messaging host; and  
4                 enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through  
5                 the instant messaging host.

1        2.     The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving and authenticating a text  
2     instant from the sender at the instant messaging host.

1        3.     The method of claim 2 wherein authenticating comprises identifying a screen  
2     name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1        4.     The method of claim 3 wherein authenticating comprises identifying an IP  
2     address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1        5.     The method of claim 1 further comprising determining capabilities of the  
2     recipient at the instant messaging host.

1        6.     The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying hardware  
2     associated with the recipient.

1        7.     The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying software  
2     associated with the recipient.

1        8.     The method of claim 5 further comprising reporting the capabilities of the  
2     recipient to the sender.

1        9.     The method of claim 8 wherein the sender displays a user interface according  
2     to the capabilities of the recipient.

1           10.    The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving, at the instant messaging

2   host, a request to establish video communication.

1           11.    The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the sender.

1           12.    The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the recipient.

1           13.    The method of claim 10 further comprising authenticating the request.

1           14.    The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying

2   a screen name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1           15.    The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying

2   an IP address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1           16.    The method of claim 1 wherein enabling video communication comprises

2   establishing a generic signaling interface channel, a control channel, and a video channel

3   between the sender and the recipient.

1           17.    The method of claim 16 wherein the control channel comprises a TCP/IP

2   socket.

1           18.    The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a UDP channel.

1           19.    The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a TCP channel.

1           20.    A communications apparatus comprising an instant messaging host configured

2   to:

3   enable instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one recipient;

4   and

5   enable video communication between the sender and the recipient.

1        21. A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, comprising  
2 instructions for:

3            enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one  
4 recipient through an instant messaging host; and

5            enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through the  
6 instant messaging host.

1        22. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium

2 comprises a disc.

1        23. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium

2 comprises a client device.

1        24. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium

2 comprises a host device.

1        25. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium

2 comprises a propagated signal.